

Message Text

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17

ACTION NEA-10

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R 201041Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3762

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 2325

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, ET

SUBJECT: SYRIAN PRESS COMMENT ON ERITREAN/ETHIOPIAN SITUATION

1. JUNE 13 AL-BAATH COLUMNIST URGED UNIFICATION OF ERITREAN REVOLUTIONARY FACTIONS IN ORDER TO CONFRONT "FIERCE ASSAULT LAUNCHED BY ADDIS ABABA AUTHORITIES WITH IMPERIALIST BACKING." COLUMNIST NOTED THAT UNIFICATION WOULD STRENGTHEN ERITREAN POSITION "IN ANY POSSIBLE FUTURE NEGOTIATION WITH ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES."

2. JUNE 18 AL-BAATH PUBLISHED MENA DISPATCH REPORTING ELECTION OF AHMAD MUHAMMAD NASSER AS PRESIDENT OF ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT IN ADDITION TO HIS ROLE AS PRESIDENT OF REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL OF 41 MEMBERS AND PRESIDENT OF RC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, WHICH IS REPORTED AS COMPRISING NINE MEMBERS. IBRAHIM IDRIS TUTIL, ABDULLAH IDRIS, ZAYN YASIN AND TASFA MARYAM ELECTED RESPECTIVELY ELF VICE PRESIDENT AND POLITBURO DIRECTOR, DIRECTOR OF MILITARY BUREAU, DIRECTOR OF FOREIGN RELATIONS OFFICE, AND DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION. NEW COMMAND DESCRIBED AS "PROGRESSIVE" AND "FROM YOUTH OF BATTLEFIELD RATHER THAN FROM ABROAD."

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3. COLUMNIST IN JUNE 18 AL-THAWRAH EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL UNITY AMONG ERITREANS AND OPINED THAT MOVEMENT "ON ITS WAY TO OVERCOMING SPLIT IN ITS RANKS." ADDED THAT SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ELF HELD MAY 6-28 WAS ATTENDED BY 946 DELEGATES.

4. SANA RELEASE IN JUNE 19 PRESS REPORTED THAT MORE THAN ONE-HALF MILLION INHABITANTS OF UGADIN DISTRICT IN "OCCUPIED WESTERN SOMALIA" BEING EXPOSED TO STARVATION AS RESULT OF POLICY EXERCISED BY "ETHIOPIAN MILITARY OCCUPATION AUTHORITIES." "UNITED FRONT FOR LIBERATION OF WESTERN SOMALIA" FEARS INCREASE IN DEATHS AT CONCENTRATION CAMPS SET UP BY ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES IN REGION. BETWEEN THREE AND SEVEN INMATES DIE DAILY IN ONE CAMP, ACCORDING TO FRONT. FRONT APPEALS TO WORLD PUBLIC OPINION TO PRESSURE ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES TO CHANGE POSITION TOWARD INNOCENT CIVILIANS.
PELLETREAU

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